

MAB 201  
5 January 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director, FBIS

THROUGH : Chief, Operations Group

SUBJECT : Monthly Report--Abidjan Bureau--December 1981

## I. GENERAL

Following a decree issued in early December by President Houphouet-Boigny raising the wages of all Ivorian workers by 10 percent, late in the month, the Embassy approved a 10-percent across-the-board increase for all FSN and AEEA employees, effective 1 January 1982. The increase decreed by Houphouet-Boigny is more than had been expected in some quarters, despite the continuing upward spiral of the cost of living, because of the stagnant condition of the Ivorian economy. However, there had been no general wage increase for two years, and there was considerable pressure on the president to grant some sort of increase.

## II. OPERATIONS

### A. Monitorial/Editorial

1. A coup in Ghana on 31 December ended a Christmas lull for the bureau. Ghana's new leader is former Air Force Lt. Jerry Rawlings, who assumed power in the country for the second time in 30 months. The bureau was alerted to the possibility of a coup by the Abidjan Embassy political officer. As a result, we began monitoring Accra radio in time to intercept in progress Rawlings' speech announcing the takeover, which he described as "nothing less than a revolution," rather than a coup. The coup was entered into the CRITIC system in Washington, which prompted the first ZZ messages in the bureau's history. The bureau chief, who was working the desk at the time, attempted to scrape the rust from whatever remains of his editorial skills, while at the same time coping with fast-flowing traffic and urgent telephone queries from high-level Embassy officials. The bureau added two weekend shifts to cover the events in Ghana, and has maintained a signon-signoff open watch on Accra radio. The Ivorian Foreign Ministry, which receives the bureau file, evinced such interest in the fate of its next-door neighbor that the bureau initiated special courier runs to deliver coup material directly to Foreign Minister Ake, over the holiday weekend, as well as to Ambassador Rawls and DCM Friedman. In addition, at the BBC's request Bureau Engineer Tom Forrest fed a recording of Rawlings' takeover speech to the BBC which was used by the World Service in news broadcasts to Africa. Coup material contributed heavily to a record bureau file of over 236,000 words, the third time in four months the file has topped the 200,000 mark.

2. On 7 December the Angolan press agency ANGOP initiated a new transmission schedule. After some initial technical difficulties, the agency began a regular pattern of eight casts a day, transmitted at intervals from 0900 to 2130 GMT and beamed to East Africa, Europe, North and Central Africa and Central America. The bureau is able to monitor most of these casts in good reception, and assumed formal coverage responsibility for ANGOP on the 15th. This was accomplished by changing Portuguese/Spanish monitor [ ] work hours to 1100-1930, which gives us live Portuguese coverage during the bulk of ANGOP's transmission day. On weekends ANGOP is covered by French monitor [ ] who has developed a working knowledge of Portuguese and has begun language instruction under [ ] tutor, the cultural affairs attache at the Brazilian Embassy. During the month the bureau filed over 20,000 words from Angolan sources, of which nearly 15,000 were from ANGOP.

#### B. Lateral Services

On the 31st, shortly after the coup in Ghana, the Embassy in Accra requested refiles of all material on the coup. The Embassy does not normally receive FBIS material. The bureau complied, and has continued to file all coup-related material to the Embassy.

### III. ADMINISTRATION

#### Personnel

French-English monitor [ ] who was formerly employed by FBIS at the old Kaduna Bureau, was married in Calabar, Nigeria on the 19th.

### IV. COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

Bureau Engineer [ ] played a sweaty but jolly Santa Claus at the annual Christmas party given on the 19th by the Embassy for the students of the International School of Abidjan and other children of official Americans in Abidjan. Long lines of children waited to perch on Santa's knee and pass on their Christmas lists. Flash bulbs popped, and the Christmas spirit prevailed. The party, held outdoors at the Ambassador's residence, was attended by some 200 children plus parents and school and Embassy officials. The day was mercifully cool for Abidjan in December, thanks to a morning rain and heavy cloud cover, but Santa nearly melted anyway, since he is not equipped with a tropical weight Santa Claus suit. Before returning to the North Pole he accepted several chilled restoratives, and recovered rapidly.

[ ]  
Chief, Abidjan Bureau

#### Attachments

1. Engineering Report
2. Monthly Production Report

ENGINEERING REPORT-DECEMBER 1981

Notable items during the month of December were the completion of installation and wiring of the new lighting fixtures in areas used by the monitors and editor. The work proceeded quite smoothly with, we believe, little disruption to normal operations. The lighting is much better than that provided by the landlord's fixtures, which we have in storage.

On 12 December the bureau was asked to monitor and record the Ø515 news transmission from Cotonou, Benin. An Akai timer was programmed and utilized with a Watkins-Johnson receiver and recorders to cover this newscast. The bureau is not normally in operation at this time. This configuration worked well and was left intact to be utilized in the future.

I was called back to the bureau on 31 December to return [redacted] phone call. Phil stated that BBC London wanted to know if we could provide a telephone feed of the first speech of Ghanaian coup leader Rawlings to London. I stated that we could and was told that BBC would call in approximately an hour. The tape was transmitted to their engineers, and at its conclusion, the Foreign Duty Editor came on the line to thank FBIS for its timely response and cooperation.

[redacted]

Bureau Engineer

CC: [redacted]  
London Bureau